

Gc
929.2
Ot255b
1588813

M. L.

REYNOLDS HISTORICAL
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

✓

ALLEN COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 1833 01430 8016



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2009 with funding from
Allen County Public Library Genealogy Center



A DISCOURSE
ON THE
Life and Character

OF
DEA. JOSEPH OTIS,

DELIVERED IN
The Second Congregational Church,
NORWICH, CONN., MARCH 19, 1854.

WITH AN APPENDIX,

BY THE PASTOR,
ALVAN BOND, D. D.

Published by Request.

NORWICH:
ANDREW STARK, PRINTER.
1855.

E 5. 0886

1588813



UNDER SECRETARY

Joseph Otis

DISCOURSE.



Hebrews, 11: 4. "BY IT HE BEING DEAD YET
SPEAKETH."

There has ever been in the bosom of man a deep seated desire to be remembered, after the activities of life have ceased. The grave as viewed by many, derives its gloomiest aspects from the circumstance, that it is the dark, sepulchral realm of oblivious silence. Who does not shrink from the forlorn idea of being committed "to dumb forgetfulness a prey."—This living sentiment has often awakened in the mind an earnest purpose to attempt something to arrest the wave that is con-

stantly bearing the living to the receptacle of the forgotten dead. Attempts have been made by many to leave on the world such a mark, to erect such a monument, material or historic, as will proudly carry their name down to future generations. But few however have been successful in these efforts. Even the monument itself, though perishable, may survive the memory of the man who built it.

The text refers to an undesigned but effectual method, by which may be secured that immortality so earnestly coveted. It notices the first death which occurred as the sad execution of that awful sentence,—“Dust thou art and unto dust thou shalt return.” The gloom of that first instance of mortality was doubtless relieved by the assurance, “that Abel was righteous, God testifying of his gifts.” He had offered to his Creator a service, that evinced the power of his faith; a sacrifice that was accepted, “and by it he being dead yet speaketh.”—

In that work of faith he yet speaketh, and has done so from the early morning of primeval society to the present day. He accomplished a work, that has perpetuated his name during a long series of intervening centuries. The idea, which this passage suggests, may be expressed as follows:—
The man of christian faith may and should so live as to exert on the world an influence for good after he is dead.

The exalted purpose, expressed in this proposition, must commend itself to every mind, that sympathizes with the spirit of christianity or with the sentiments of true benevolence. And yet few comparatively are governed by this noble principle. Strong as the desire is to be remembered, after the scenes of life are past, not many seek that enviable immortality, which is connected with a life of devotion to the cause of Christ, and the interests of humanity.

There are some, who covet the distinction of historic notoriety. Human history

is a complex and protracted drama, in which the warrior or statesman is the prominent actor. The historic muse has thrown around these illustrious master spirits a halo of false glory, the disastrous tendency of which has been to develope in thousands of misguided admirers the latent element of a fatal ambition to achieve a like notoriety. A thousand eloquent changes are rung on the names of men whom the world has delighted to honor, not for their virtues, but for heroic daring, martial prowess, matchless statesmanship, or signal achievements in other departments of human enterprise. A conspicuous niche in the historic temple has ever been earnestly coveted by men, whose ruling passion was pride. And it is so now. How many labor for such posthumous distinction, not realizing, that

Fame is the shade of immortality,
And in itself a shadow. Soon as caught,
Condemned, it sinks to nothing in the grasp

Many there are, who, loosing sight of the only true idea of what constitutes an enviable immortality, have concentrated their thoughts, purposes and efforts, in winning the consideration that is awarded to extensive earthly possessions. Their monument is a worldly fortune, and the delusive idea is, that if their names may be enshrined in urns of gold, they will live in the grateful memory of those, who may inherit their splendid establishments and princely wealth.— But how long is the successful architect of a secular fortune remembered, if he has lived only to himself, if he has labored only to amass and absorb, without having entertained any far reaching purpose of benevolent disbursement?

The fact is as melancholy as it is significant, that men of renown, mighty men of valor, how much soever honored, feared, or courted while living, are very soon forgotten, after their mortal bodies are consigned to the trust of the silent grave.—

The tides of worldliness and excitement sweep on, and men are borne onward by the current, and all thoughts of the departed, however distinguished in their day, are soon obliterated from the mind, unless they so live, that the good works which follow them, shall continue to speak and testify to their excellence.

There are high and noble purposes, which, if a man adopts and carries into execution, will give him a name, that shall live in the influence he will exert after he is dead. Like the martyr-patriarch of the text, he may offer the sacrifice that God will accept, such as shall be an imperishable memorial, that will perpetuate his name through coming generations. The monuments erected by faith and love, are constructed of materials which defy the ravages of time, and stand immovable, conspicuous, and attractive, while centuries shall revolve over their sun-lit summits. There is a grandeur in that immortality, which is secured by the

self-denying, cheerful, continued labors of the wide-souled charity, which "seeketh not her own,"—a charity that is "rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." The precious seed that has been planted by the labors of christian benevolence, will in future times yield successive harvests of blessings, which will not fail to revive the honored name of the generous sower with grateful recollections.

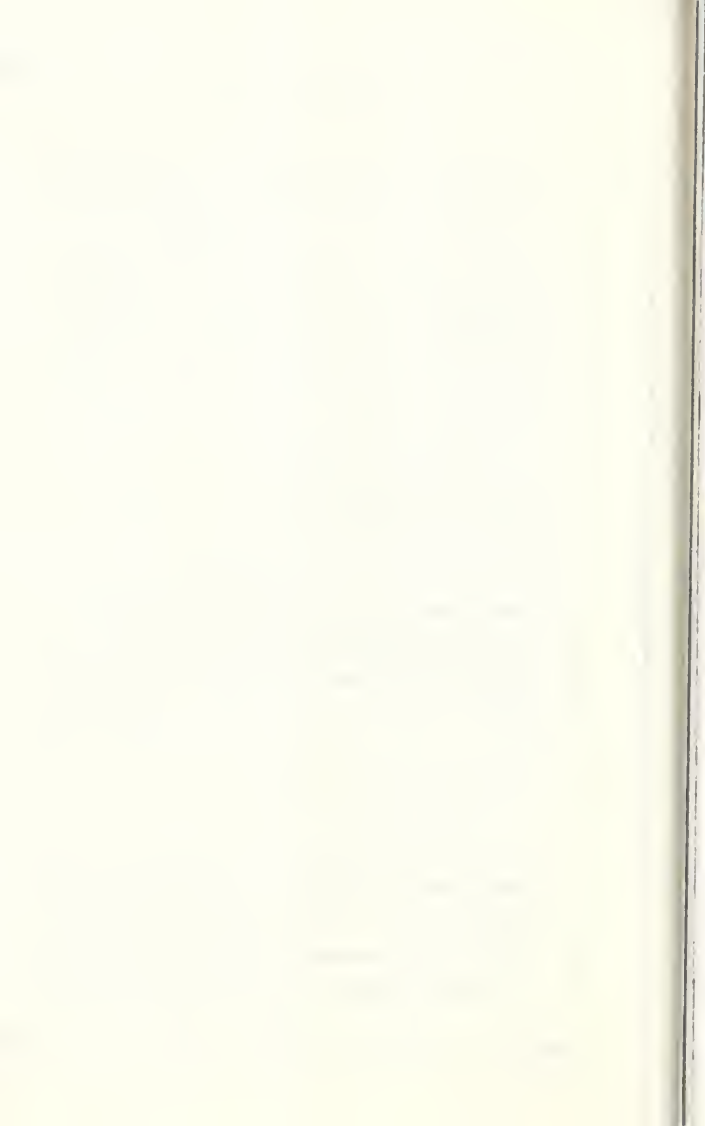
It is not so much the splendor of the sacrifice made, as the motive by which it is prompted, that invests it with the cloud of acceptable incense, and secures for it Heaven's recognition, and the world's remembrance. That woman, whose heart was drawn forth in undissembled love towards her Redeemer, was cheerful in the labor performed, when she poured over his head the "very precious ointment." True, her conduct was rebuked by the calculating spirit of worldly disciples; but it was a demonstration, with which Jesus was pleased.

And he expressed his commendation of the humble deed:—"She hath wrought a good work. Wherever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her." By such a deed of love this woman though dead, yet speaketh, and will continue to speak by an example of earnest devotion to her Savior, so long as the gospel shall be preached.

The circumstances in which we are placed, and our relations to the future are such, that we *may and should so live*, as to exert an influence in favor of religion and humanity, after we shall have rested from our labors. There is nothing impracticable in this. In all ages it has been done. How many are speaking to-day, who long since died. They speak in their ever living examples of rectitude, of usefulness, of virtuous consistency. "Their works do follow them." Baxter yet speaketh in that little book,—"*A call to the unconverted,*"—and unborn gen-

erations shall hear that call, and many will respond to it with a penitent heart. Bunyan is dead,—but he yet speaketh in those graphic scenes, depicted in “The Pilgrim’s Progress.” How many have been instructed, encouraged, and delighted, as they have read or listened to the narrative of his wonderful dream. And in all times to come people of other languages and other climes shall hear that voice, as it sounds forth from Bedford Jail, through the pages of an immortal work. Watts and Cowper, long since dead, yet speak in those sweet, matchless, soul-stirring stanzas, which have embalmed their precious memories for immortality. How constantly do we hear the voices of the dead,—especially those who have died in the Lord.

In the same class, and entitled to like honor may be included those, who, in other departments of the Lord’s vineyard, have been faithful servants. The humble minister of the Gospel, who has been instrumen-



tal of converting sinners from the error of their way, will live and speak in those, whom he has guided to the Saviour. The christian patriot, who, true to the lofty principles of his holy religion, maintains his fearless position in the high-places of power, and resists schemes of wickedness, amidst storms of reproach and insult, shall speak after he is dead; and his name shall travel down to posterity as one, who faithful stood among the faithless.

The liberal soul, that has with open hand scattered abroad his charities, long after his earthly work is finished, shall live in the memory of the future, and speak in those deeds of love and philanthropy which have characterized his life. The rills of his charity, flowing silently, constantly, spontaneously, while in some instances their mission is the relief of the poor, and the encouragement of the depressed, in others are important tributaries to those larger streams, on whose placid bosom are borne the blessings



of knowledge and salvation to a dying world. Perhaps he founds a College like Harvard, and it becomes a rich fountain of knowledge for a State. He establishes a professorship in a Theological School, like Bartlett or Abbott, and his voice is heard in lessons of wisdom, addressed to successive classes of young men, preparing for the work of the ministry. He lays the foundation for some philanthropic or literary institute, and chisels his name on a monument of usefulness, that shall with honor transmit his memory to other generations, as a far-sighted, large-hearted benefactor. Those of his own generation may be forgotten; but he will live, and his name will be enshrined with gratitude and reverence in the hearts of those who will appreciate and share in his goodness.

Such are some of the numerous ways in which a man may so live, so occupy his talents, so appropriate his substance, as a steward of the Lord, that he will not only



diffuse around him, while he lives, the precious streams of a perennial benevolence, but after he is dead, continue to speak in example, and in the kindly influences, which flow onward to bless in due time generations yet unborn. So to live is to answer one of life's great ends. So to live is a leading characteristic of the upright man. So to live is godlike.

A life thus spent,—the work of faith and labor of love thus performed,—will not only be rewarded by fruits in old age, but be followed with peace in the end. When the winter of our being comes on with its trials and storms, what will tend to diffuse over the closing scene so sweet a light, or inspire so precious a hope, as the consciousness of having lived for Christ and his kingdom. “Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace.”

The foregoing train of remark has been suggested by the death of a venerable, and

universally respected fellow citizen, one of the fathers of our community. The decease of such a man may well be regarded as no ordinary bereavement. For though advanced in years, he retained in vigorous activity his mental and social faculties, and abounding in good works, he to the last manifested undiminished interest in every object which in his mature and honest judgment tended to the improvement of society.

I am aware, that from the modesty and simplicity, which marked his character, he would discourage any overwrought eulogy on his name, or any ostentatious exhibition of the principles, developed in his life, or the deeds of charity, which make up so much of his personal history. He never sought notoriety; and in the distribution of his alms he sounded no trumpet to call attention to what he was doing. He needs not any tribute of human praise to render his memory precious to those who knew him. It is not for his sake that I propose to speak of him on this occasion.

But in this house, for the accommodations of which we are so largely indebted to his munificent contributions, and where he loved to worship; and on this occasion when so many hearts are in sympathy with the subject, I should not do justice to my own feelings, or answer your expectations, were I not to notice with some speciality the life of one, who "being dead yet speaketh,"—one whose works, though he rests from his labors, will follow him, and tell to other generations the story of goodness.

JOSEPH OTIS was born in this town in July, 1768, and was far advanced in the 86th year of his age.* His early youth was distinguished for those amiable qualities of character,—which not only inspired the affection and confidence of friends, but gave hopeful intimation of success and usefulness in subsequent life. His early opportunities for education were such only, as were furnished by the primary school. But his mind was of such a stamp as favored self-culture,

* See Note A.

and he acquired by his own efforts and discriminating observation, an amount of practical knowledge, and a facility and precision in its application, that fitted him to appear unembarrassed and at home in the highly intelligent circles, with which during his life, he was associated. From his youth he was trained to commercial pursuits. The scene of these pursuits, with the exception of a few years, was the city of New York. His position, integrity, enterprise, and success, secured for him the respect and confidence of the highest class of merchants, who at that time controlled the commercial affairs of the metropolis. He has often told me, that for many years there was scarcely a merchant of distinction in the city, with whom he was not personally acquainted.

It was in the midst of successful pursuits as a man of business in the noon-tide of life, that in common with many others of his profession, his affairs were involved in embarrassment by the embargo of 1807, and the subsequent difficulties growing out

of their existing relations of hostility between this country and Great Britain. He met those storms, by which the commerce of the country was for several years interrupted and crippled, with that firmness and christian sentiment, which prevented him from sinking under the adversities of such trying times, or abandoning the idea of ultimate recovery and success. During those years of conflict with unpropitious events, his mind was disciplined, and his resolutions strengthened for a vigorous and successful prosecution of business, after the cessation of national hostilities, and the active revival of commercial enterprise under new and more favorable treaty stipulations.

To do justice to a life so long and so useful,—and to a character luminous with so many excellencies, must exceed what can be accomplished within the limits of a common discourse. A brief reference to a few points is all that will be attempted on this occasion.

As a man, MR. OTIS was possessed of intellectual qualities and social virtues, which under the rigid discipline, to which they were subjected, imparted to his character those elements of moral power, that commanded respect. He was endowed in no ordinary degree with a sagacious common sense, that contributed not a little to the direct and successful course, which, from the beginning he pursued. With this native gift, stored as his mind was with the treasures of acute observation and mature experience,—he was well qualified to act as a counsellor, in whose judgement great reliance could be placed. He apprehended the main points of a case, submitted to his attention with such quickness and accuracy, and he expressed his opinions with such decision, frankness, and modesty, that his services as an adviser in matters of business were sought and valued even down to the late winter of life.

His intercourse with his fellow men in the exciting affairs and amidst the tempta-

tions of business was characterized by unbending integrity, exactness, and punctuality. The morality he carried with him, when he went forth to the absorbing activities of the commercial arena, was not diluted by the specious doctrines of expediency, which an honest man can never justify at the bar of conscience. The law of rectitude was as sacred and authoritative with him in secular transactions, as it was in the social and domestic circle. He eschewed the inconsistency, not unfrequently betrayed, of being a Cornelius with alms and prayers at home,—and a Shylock in the counting room. He put on integrity as a robe, and it covered him.*

In the relations he sustained, he honestly aimed to be actuated by such maxims and principles, as would endure the test of a rigid scrutiny by the light of conscience, and by the laws of christianity. Accustomed to look at things from a position, invested with the luminous atmosphere of

* See Note B.

truth and virtue, his views were clear, comprehensive, and consistent. He understood the ethics of sterling common sense in their application to the intercourse and relations of social and domestic life. Affable, courteous, sincere, and obliging, he won the esteem of those, who made his acquaintance, and secured their confidence. They who enjoyed his friendship, were assured, that it was something "more than the smooth words and affected smiles of unmeaning profession. Possessing and cherishing benevolent sympathies in the happiness of his fellow men, he was ever devising some way, in which he might show his friends substantial demonstrations of interest in their comfort and welfare. He never waited to be solicited to perform a service, which he had in his power to render for the relief of such friends, as might in a given exigency : 1 the need of aid and encouragement. Many a heart can testify to the relief experienced, when the sunshine of his

warm friendship has lifted the cloud from a depressed spirit. In his proffers of kindness there was a delicacy that indicated the refinement of his social nature. As was said not long since of a departed friend, whose acquaintance I enjoyed, he was "eminently genial in his social feelings, courteous in manner, gentlemanly in his feelings and in their manifestation, he could not endure that boisterous mode of speech and act, which too often makes repulsive what would otherwise be attractive. His were kind thoughts, kindly expressed—friendly emotions, delicately shown—benevolent feelings, benevolently manifested."

Having spent many years of his life amidst the stirring scenes of a great city, where he accumulated property sufficient to meet his temporal wants, and to enable him to respond generously to the calls of charity; he returned to this his native town, about fifteen years since, where he has passed the evening of his days, and closed his long and

useful life. Though severe sickness had impaired his health, and subjected him to some painful infirmities, he did not retire into selfish seclusion, but identified himself with the most important interests of society, and showed a readiness to bear a liberal share of the burdens created by public improvements, and to render such personal services, as were compatible with his strength. As a citizen he entrenched himself in public confidence and esteem. The sense of bereavement that has been so publicly manifested, testifies to the high estimation in which he has been held.

The munificent appropriations made by him for the establishment and support of a public Library, have erected to his name a monument, that will transmit to coming generations the evidence of his appreciation of intellectual culture, as an essential element of social refinement and substantial prosperity. His comprehensive forecaste consulted for the future, as well as the pres-

ent. Hence his plans were concerted with reference to permanency in respect to this important Institution.

In view of the precarious condition of such an institution, if left dependent on the voluntary contributions of the public, he made ample provision for its enlargement and permanency. For a considerable time he had revolved in his mind the question,—what kind of an investment within the range of his means he could make, that would best subserve the important purpose of mental culture and social improvement in this city. He decided to establish a public Library on such a foundation, as would enable all classes, however moderate their resources, to avail themselves, at small expense, of its privileges.

He lived to witness the successful operations of this institution. and felt that the evidence of its present benefits and its prospective usefulness, was a rich remuneration for what he had done. The basis on which

it rests is such, as promises a perpetual increase in value during future generations. If its affairs shall be judiciously managed it will remain a perennial fountain of such influences as shall promote in this community the diffusion of knowledge and the cultivation of a taste for the rational pleasures of mental refinement. I am acquainted with no other institution of the kind, except some connected with colleges, that is so liberally endowed, or that combines so many advantages available at so small expense.*

It is not only as a man of unbending integrity, and a fellow citizen of generous and comprehensive views, that we claim an interest in the character of Mr. Otis; but, as a christian he merits the tribute of a special notice.† In the year 1809 he was received by profession to Cedar Street Church, in New York, then under the pastoral care of Dr. John B. Romeyn. At that time this was one of the prominent Presbyterian

* See Note C.

† See Note D.

Churches in that city, and its pastor ranked among the most eminent of his profession. As a member of that church he was active, judicious, and large-hearted,—one who was foremost, as he ever has been, in devising liberal things for sustaining the work of the ministry, and the institutions of religion. The estimate in which he was held in that influential church was evinced by their action in calling him to the responsible office of an elder, for which he proved himself eminently qualified.

From the commencement of his christian life till its late and serene evening, he fulfilled the expectations usually awakened when such a man takes his stand openly on the Lord's side. He was one of those laymen, to whom pastors look for aid and co-operation in the work of faith and the labor of love. He was in the vigor of his manhood and ripe in experience when those noble institutions of christian benevolence were founded, the center of whose opera-

tions is the City of New York. In their establishment he had an important agency, and to their support he, as a cheerful giver, made generous contributions, several of which he has remembered in his will.*

Since he became united to this church, which was in the year 1839, we have been witnesses to his steadfast interest in every good work, and to the consistency which has marked his life. Unassuming, and yet firm, he sought not honor from men; nor would he ever consent to compromise the claims of duty, as he interpreted them, or surrender his opinions, when deliberately formed, for the sake of conciliating those who might differ from him. What he claimed for himself, he cheerfully conceded to others. His was truly a catholic spirit. Neither his sympathies nor charities were confined to his own church, nor to his own denomination. That spirit of benevolence, which with undiminished warmth glowed in his bosom to the last, was truly comprehensive.

* See Note E.

To his fellowship he welcomed all who loved the Lord Jesus, without inquiring whether their creed, in all particulars, coincided with his own. He had his own religious views, which he adopted as the result of careful and independent examination of the word of God. The Bible, which he profoundly revered and diligently read, was his only rule of faith, and by its spirit he aimed to live.

As a member of this church and ecclesiastical society he has been too well known and appreciated, to require on my part more than a bare illusion to the relation he sustained to us. The deep interest he took in the erection of this house of prayer;—that organ, which was a tribute of his beneficence to the choral department of the sanctuary;—the cheerful and generous contributions he has ever been ready to make to sustain the ministry, the sabbath school, and other objects of a local character,—testify to his love of the church, and that he was

ready to every good work involving its prosperity. Among the objects, the importance of which he was quick to apprehend, was the establishment of a pastoral library. In this matter he anticipated a pastor's necessities; and the example has already suggested to the friends of the ministry in several other places a similar provision for the benefit of pastors, whose own limited means will not admit of other than stinted appropriations for books.

In connection with the late JABEZ HUNTINGTON, he was chosen a deacon in the year 1842, in which office he continued till his death, fulfilling its duties with dignity and deep seriousness. To see these venerable fathers in Israel, at the advanced age of four-score years, on sacramental occasions passing the hallowed symbols to the members of the Savior's household, and to mark the devout and serious aspect, with which they performed the service was impressive and affective. Venerable men,—ye were faithful servants.

Having entered into the joy of your Lord, ye are now united in holier, happier services in your Father's house.

“There light or shade no more succeed by turns,
There reigns the eternal sun with an unclouded ray,
There all is calm as night, yet all immortal day,
And truth forever shines, and love forever reigns.”

Since this house was built, he habitually occupied the same seat; and when by reason of his late infirmities he was compelled to forego the privilege, which he so highly prized, he usually requested the perusal of one of the discourses delivered from Sabbath to Sabbath, as a substitute for the privilege of a personal attendance.

For several months he felt the pressure of increasing infirmities,—and under the conviction, that his time was short, he put his house in order, and waited amidst sufferings, patiently endured, for the coming of the solemn crisis. With a humble estimate of his own religious attainments, and apparently forgetful of all he had done to

promote the cause of his Savior, and the welfare of his fellow men,—with a childlike, trustful spirit, he placed his entire reliance for acceptance with God on the atoning merits of that Redeemer, whom having not seen he loved.*

That the venerable friend, to whom the foregoing tribute is rendered, was faultless, is not claimed by those who esteemed him most. Perfection is not an element of humanity. As declining years subjected him to its inevitable infirmities, he was conscious of more excitability of temperament, which at times would be developed in the expression of impatience. When his mind was disturbed by some irritating influence, he found that he had in some measure lost the power of self control he once possessed. This certainly is no strange thing in one who has passed the period of fourscore years. Such defects charity will overlook. They are but spots on the disc of the setting sun, which neither chill his genial warmth, nor

* See Note F.

obscure his mellow radiance, as he sinks below the horizon.

When such a father passes away, how many there are to mourn, not for him; but on their own account, that they will see his friendly face no more. The bereaved family, whom he loved, and whose privilege it was to minister to the comfort of his declining years, will mourn the absence from their domestic group of the venerable father, who has shared so long in their filial devotion and warm affection. Other kindred and friends, by whom he was venerated and esteemed, will mourn, that they shall meet him no more in the place of business, or in the retirement of his pleasant home. They who in circumstances of trial have shared in his paternal sympathy and proffered assistance, will mourn, that they can no more assure him of their grateful appreciation of his friendship. As a christian community, we mourn, that a pillar has fallen,—the like to which we may not see

again.* But we mourn not as those who have no hope. He has left the most satisfactory evidence, that his spirit, chastened by personal sufferings, and sanctified by grace, was fully ripe for that inheritance reserved for him in the heavenly Jerusalem. In that realm of light and peace, whither he has gone,—gone to join the general assembly and church of the first born,—he will meet with loved ones who years since went before him, and who will welcome him with the ardor of a heavenly affection to their fellowship and pleasures. O what blessed recognitions will there be, as he shall be introduced to the sainted ones, who preceded him to that city not made with hands.

“The fathers,—where are they?” How few remain of that generation, to which our venerable friend belonged.—Soon and the last one will have finished his course. We are all borne rapidly along the stream, that speeds its way to the shoreless ocean of an eternal futurity. Amidst the exciting scenes,

* See Note G.

which meet us in the battle field of life, we are in danger of losing sight of the one great interest, which claims and should have our earnest attention. While we cherish the memory of departed saints, who through faith and patience inherit the promises, let us study their example, imitate their virtues, and like them so live, that it will be gain to die.

“So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan, that moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon; but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.”

The time is at hand when we ourselves shall be summoned to the last stern, decisive conflict. Then to find, that we have our armor on ready for the crisis, will compensate a thousand fold all the labors we may have performed, and all the sacrifices



we may have made in the Master's service. So to live, that our example and works shall perpetuate an influence for good, long after these mortal bodies shall have dissolved in kindred dust, should be our earnest undying purpose.

Then as death, the king of terrors, shall come, he will come not with his crushing iron foot-tread, but harmless and crownless, a commissioner of peace, to announce our warfare accomplished,—our victories won. The work assigned us, having been done,—faithfully done,—Jesus, as he promised, will come and receive us to himself, to be where he is, and to behold his glory. O how will it nerve the spirit for its ascension to catch a view of the golden harvest, which springs up fresh and fruitful from the seed that was sown in tears during the working days of probation. *“Wherefore my beloved brethren, be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.”**

* See Note H.

Blank

APPENDIX.

GENEALOGICAL RECORD

OF

Joseph Otis' Family.

A.

The following facts are derived from a Historical Memoir of the family, prepared by Horatio N. Otis, of New York.

The first of the name who settled in New England, was JOHN OTIS. His father was Richard Otis of Glastenbury, County of Somersetshire, in the south-west part of England. In his Will is found the name of his son, John, who came with his family to Hingham, Massachusetts, as early as the year 1635. He came in company with the Rev. Peter Hobart and twenty-nine associates, who settled in the same town. He was a substantial yeoman, and left his native country, as has been supposed, with

a view to accompany his pastor, who was a staunch non-conforming clergyman. He was identified with the Puritans, and shared in the labors and sufferings, to which the ancestors of New England were subjected in the establishment of the first colonial settlements. Subsequently he removed to Weymouth, where he died, May 31, 1657, aged seventy-six years.

The oldest son of John Otis was named JOHN, born in England in 1620, and he accompanied his father to this country. In the year 1661, he removed to Scituate, where he received a grant of land. He died there in the year 1683, aged sixty-three years. The fourth son of John Otis, Jr. was JOSEPH, born in Scituate, in the year 1665. He held the office of Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the County of Plymouth, from the year 1703 to 1714. Important offices in the town were entrusted to him, and he was twice elected a representative to "The Great and General Court." In or about the year 1721, he emigrated to New London, in this State, where he died in the year 1754. The estimate in which he was there held is recorded in the following obituary notice. "Judge Otis was a christian upon principle, a public spirited and useful man, distinguished by talents of the

solid, judicious, and useful, rather than of the brilliant and showy kind. * * * * As a private individual he had the union of simple dignity with benevolent courtesy, which mark the gentleman, and he died at the advanced age of eighty-nine years, universally lamented." He married a daughter of Nathaniel Thomas of Marshfield, who owned and resided on the estate, occupied by the late Hon. Daniel Webster.

The third son of Judge Joseph Otis, born in the year 1712, was named JOSEPH. He settled in that part of New London, afterwards incorporated into the town of Montville. He died in the year 1793, aged eighty-one years. His oldest son, also named JOSEPH, was born in the year 1739, in what is now Montville. He was a deacon in the congregational church in that place. He married, for his first wife Lucy Horton, of New London, and for his second wife a widow lady by the name of Carew, of Norwich, to which town he removed. At a subsequent period he went to Suffield, where he died in the year 1823, aged eighty-four years. His children were a daughter, Mrs. Benjamin Snow, still living at Providence, R. I.; JOSEPH, born in Norwich, in the year 1768,—the subject of this notice; James, born in the year 1770, who died in his youth; Oliver, born in the year 1773, who resided in the State of

New York; and Shubael, born in the year 1776, still living in Hinsdale, Mass.

In the Centennial Discourse, pronounced at Hingham by Hon. Solomon Lincoln, the following tribute is rendered to the memory of this ancient family. "We recognize with pride, borne upon our annals, the name OTIS. * * * * Is it not possible that something of that ardent love of freedom and strong aversion to despotic power, which have distinguished the descendants, may have been derived from an intelligent and independent ancestry."—The historian of Scituate, where at an early period several of the family lived, remarks:—"Though they cannot exhibit a line of illustrious names, yet they are such as partook in the perils of founding and defending this country in times, when courage, constancy and patience were indeed common virtues."

Several names of historic celebrity may be mentioned as having descended from this family. Among them is John Otis of Barnstable, Mass., who died in the year 1727. During twenty-one years he was a member of the "Board of his Majesty's Council," in the State. Col James Otis, who died in the year 1778, was an active compeer with Adams, Quincy, and Hancock, in their labors to achieve the independence of their country. Samuel Allyne

Otis, who graduated at Harvard College, with the class of 1759, was the father of the late Harrison Grey Otis, of Boston. During the Revolutionary war he was a member of the "Board of War."—In the year 1788 he was elected a member of Congress, and after the adoption of the Federal Constitution he was chosen Secretary of the United States Senate, which office he held from the 8th of April, 1789, till the 18th of April, 1814, a period of twenty-five years.

Another of the family, distinguished in American History, is JAMES OTIS, "The Patriot," born in Barnstable, in the year 1724. He was one of the earliest and most fearless assertors and defenders of the principles which led to our national existence. He was intimately associated with Dr. Franklin, and immediately prior to the revolution was equally well known to the Colonies. The occasion on which he signalized himself was in his masterly plea against the so-called "Writs of Assistance,"—or warrants on the authority of which custom-house officers could search, when and where they pleased, for smuggled goods, and call in the aid of others to assist them in the odious service. The merchants of Boston made a strenuous opposition to this measure of the exacting government of the crown, and they retained James Otis as the advocate

of their cause in resisting the action of these writs. This was in the year 1761. The elder President Adams expressed the following testimony to the spirit and power of the then young advocate. "Otis was a flame of fire;—with a promptitude of classical allusions, a depth of research, a rapid summary of historical events and dates, a profusion of legal authorities, a prophetic glance of his eye into futurity, and a rapid torrent of impetuous eloquence, he hurried away all before him. American Independence was then and there born. * * *

Every man of an immense crowded audience appeared to go away, as I did, ready to take arms against "Writs of Assistance." Then and there was the first scene of the first act of opposition to the arbitrary claims of Great Britain.

DEA. OTIS

As a Man of Business.

B.

Mr. Otis at the age of twelve years entered the mercantile service of Mr. McCurdy, a prominent citizen in Norwich, with whom he continued about ten years. His integrity, economy and faithful attention to the business with which he was entrusted secured the confidence of his employer, and laid the foundation for his subsequent success.

With very small resources he commenced business for himself at the age of twenty-one, in the vicinity of Charleston, S. C. Not being satisfied with his prospects he returned to New York, where in the year 1796, he became established in mercantile pursuits.

In the year 1797 he married Miss Nancy Huntington, of Norwich, Ct., with whom he lived forty-seven years. Mrs. Otis was a lady of many amiable qualities,—and a consistent, active, beloved christian. She united with the Cedar Street Presbyterian Church, by profession, at the time of its

organization. This Church was organized in Nov. 1803, and consisted only of twenty-eight members, of which Mrs. Otis was one. She remained in connection with the same, till her husband removed to Norwich. She died in the faith and peace of the christian, Aug. 27th, 1844, aged seventy-two.

In the year 1810, he went into partnership with Asa Otis, Esq., now of New London, with whom he continued several years, one of the parties residing in Richmond, Va. He prosecuted business with enterprise and energy, sustaining an enviable reputation, and a credit that enabled him to take rank among the best class of commercial men in the city. His career was again arrested by the war, which commenced in 1812, and by which the commerce of the country was for a time prostrated. He retired during this period to the town of Stratford, in this State, till the peace of 1815. About this time he returned to the city, and resumed business as a commission merchant, in company with Asa Otis, Esq., already named. This partnership was continued till 1833, after its dissolution he pursued business in other relations till the year 1838, when, in consequence of ill health, he removed to Norwich, his native place, where he passed the remainder of his life among kindred and friends, to whom he endeared himself by ministrations of unwearied kindness, esteemed and venerated by all classes.

From conversations with gentlemen who knew him well in the days of his activity and strength, abundant testimony is given, with singular coincidence, to the excellencies that won for him no ordinary share of the confidence and good will of his fellow men. A gentleman who was for many years intimately associated with him in the walks of active business, remarked to the writer that he never knew him lose his self-control or betray irritation of temper, so as to speak unadvisedly. He was scrupulous in avoiding ungenerous strictures upon the character of others,—regarding the rule,—“Speak evil of no man,”—as one of the imperative laws of social life and good neighborhood.

They who have known him under various circumstances, and for a long time, speak of him as having been a general favorite in the relationships with which he was connected,—one whose society was sought. Full of the milk of human kindness, which had not been absorbed by the earnest excitement of business, he was ever ready for deeds of charity. Having, when a young man, had to struggle with hardships and occasional embarrassments as the architect of his fortune, he knew how to sympathize with young men, and delighted in the opportunity, when in his power, to render them material aid.

In the highly respected circle in which he moved,

in prosecuting the walks of a long commercial life in the great metropolis of our country, he secured and retained the enviable reputation of a man whose credit was above suspicion, and whose word was never questioned. System, promptness, exactness, and integrity, were the elements which marked his conduct in the relations of business. His associates could rely on finding him punctual as to time, and ready to assume all the responsibility that legitimately devolved upon him. Such is the character accorded to him by the venerable survivors of the generation to which he belonged, and with whom he was associated.

The New York Commercial Advertiser, in announcing his death, remarks,—JOSEPH OTIS, Esq., for many years was an esteemed merchant of this city. He was one of the original subscribers to the Commercial Advertiser, and continued to take it up to the time of his death, a period of fifty-seven years.

DEA. OTIS,
THE
Founder of Otis Library.

C.

Mr. Otis did not at first contemplate the execution of his plan to found a library while he lived. He procured a suitable lot for the building, and made out a trust-deed of the same, specifying the purpose to which it should be appropriated.

As he was surveying the site of the future Library one day with the friend to whom his plans had been made known, it was suggested to him that if his means would warrant the outlay, it might contribute somewhat to the pleasure he ever took in doing good, to go so far at least as to erect the building, that he might have a more definite idea of the aspect of the monument he designed to leave behind him. The suggestion was favorably entertained; but he added,—“I am too old to assume the care and labor of arranging for and superintending the erection of such an edifice as would be suited to the purpose proposed. But if you will assume the responsibility I will furnish the requisite

funds, the amount not to exceed five thousand dollars, and you may commence the work as soon as arrangements can be made." The proposal was acceded to on condition, that the assistance of another gentleman, who was named, could be secured. Such assistance on learning the facts, was cheerfully proffered by that individual, and the work was soon commenced.

Mr. Otis was full and explicit in the wishes he expressed, that such a building should be erected as would be durable, tasteful, attractive, and so furnished, as to combine the conveniences of a comfortable reading room, as well as a circulating Library. The architect, the late Joshua W. Shepard, submitted a plan of a building, forty feet in length by twenty-eight in width, and two stories in height, the lower story being thirteen feet from floor to ceiling, the whole to be enclosed by a substantial iron fence.

In accordance with the plan, as given by Mr. Shepard, the work was put under contract, and was satisfactorily done. Formal possession was taken of the building in January, 1850, by the Trustees, who had been designated by Mr. Otis, and invested with full powers to manage and superintend the affairs of the Institution, and to fill such vacancies in their board, as might from time to time occur.

A constitution was adopted, and by-laws framed, and a Librarian, Mr. H. B. Buckingham, was appointed. A charter was subsequently procured from the Legislature of the State, constituting seven gentlemen, designated by Mr. Otis, a body corporate and politic by the name of the "*Otis Library*," and by that name to have perpetual succession. The following gentlemen were constituted the original Board of Trustees, viz: Rev. Alvan Bond, D. D., Worthington Hooker, M. D., J. G. W. Trumbull, George Perkins, William A. Buckingham, Robert Johnson, and Charles Johnson.

When the building was completed, he advanced two thousand dollars for the purchase of books to commence a library; which sum being expended, arrangements were made for the delivery of books in July, 1850. A very general interest was taken in the Institution, and a large number of readers applied for tickets of admission to its privileges, which were furnished for the sum of one dollar a year, the price being graduated so as to meet the current expenses. Other resources were subsequently provided by the generous founder to procure additional books. Through his liberality constant additions have been made of such works as were approved by the Trustees, on whom is devolved the duty of examining and approving every work that is placed on the shelves of the Library.

The sum total appropriated by Mr. Otis for the establishment of the Institution, up to the time of his death, is as follows: For the lot, eight hundred and fifty dollars; For the building, five thousand dollars; For fences, furniture, and fixtures, six hundred and thirty-six dollars, amounting to six thousand, four hundred and eighty-six dollars. The amount appropriated for the purchase of books up to the time of his decease, is four thousand dollars. The number of volumes on the catalogue at the present time is four thousand and eighty-eight.—This includes some of the books which have been presented to the library by friends and patrons. The entire investment made by Mr. Otis, while living, was ten thousand, four hundred and eighty-six dollars. In his last will he left the sum of seven thousand dollars to be appropriated, as in the judgment of the Trustees shall be most advantageous to the growth and permanent prosperity of the Institution.

To render the advantages of this Institution available as is practicable to the purposes of mental and moral culture, arrangements have been made for having it open daily, Sundays excepted. Since it was opened to the public there have been between thirteen and fourteen hundred different readers. The average number of persons holding tickets

has thus far exceeded six hundred annually. The annual circulation of books exceeds twelve thousand. The income of the Library from the sale of tickets to January 1st, 1854, has been two thousand, one hundred and sixty-one dollars and ninety-eight cents, and the current expenses, exclusive of what has been appropriated to the purchase of books, has been two thousand, one hundred and eighteen dollars and fifty-eight cents. These are some of the facts showing the practical working of the Institution, and its important relation to the intelligence and general culture of the community.

DEA. OTIS

As the Active Christian.

D.

The christian life of Mr. Otis was marked by singular uniformity, consistency, and charity, as will be evident from a few of the many facts, which his history, if fully written, would reveal. He was one of the original founders of the Cedar Street Ecclesiastical Congregation, and bore his share in the burdens, incident to a new enterprise of this kind. The subscription for a church was opened in 1807, and the building was completed during the following year. He united with some sixty others, few of whom are now among the living, in extending an invitation to Dr. J. B. Romeyn, then of Albany, to become their minister, who accepted the invitation. Of the original projectors and patrons of this important enterprise the following are the only survivors, so far as the writer has been able to ascertain,—George Griswold, Najah Taylor, Joseph Strong, Stephen Whitney, John Ripley, Nathaniel Richards, A. S. Norwood, William Hall, and John Coit, most of whom still reside in New York.

A Presbyterian Church consisting of twenty-eight members was constituted about the same time of which, in connection with the newly gathered congregation, Dr. Romeyn took the pastoral charge. Mr. Otis united with this church in the following year. This new movement awakened much interest at the time, and was eminently successful. In its prosperity he was deeply interested, and was esteemed as one of its pillars. In consequence of the emigration of the people towards what was then considered the upper part of the city, a removal was decided on as necessary to the prosperity of the Society. A location was accordingly procured in Duane Street, and a new and expensive Church was there erected in 1835. Six years previous to this remove he had been elected one of the elders of the church, to the duties of which office he devoted himself with ability and judgment. He was active in the important movement which placed this church, which assumed the name of the "Duane Street Presbyterian Church," among the first ecclesiastical organizations of the city. Of the male members living, when Mr. Otis joined it in 1809, there survive only Hugh Auchincloss, Pelatiah Peritt, Horace Hinsdale, and William Hall.

The deeply religious spirit of Mr. Otis was evinced not only in public duties, to the regular

performance of which he was devoted, but in the private walks of life, and in his relations as a man of business. Some extracts from letters of business indicate the habitual state of his mind, and show that religion was at all times with him the paramount interest.

Alluding to the establishment of the firm of Messrs. — —, young men of his acquaintance, he adds,—“May He who alone orders and directs the affairs of nations and kingdoms, bless and prosper them in all their lawful endeavors to gain wealth, to do good and communicate, to take a high stand in the commercial world, an honorable stand in society, and to secure lasting happiness to themselves.” In a message of sympathy for an afflicted friend he thus expresses his feelings,—“I hope his painful sufferings may be sanctified to him. I also hope it may lead him to look unto Him who has power to heal all his diseases, and grant to him the comforts and the consolations which the Gospel alone can impart.”

The eminently social feelings of Mr. Otis rendered him in a high degree susceptible of pleasure from the kind attention of his friends. In an acknowledgement of a visit from Mr. A——, and daughter in the summer of 1852,—having in very strong language expressed his gratification, he remarks,—

“Probably in a great measure it was owing to my advanced age, debility, feebleness, loneliness, feeling that my old tried friends are far away from me.” As if conscious of the presence of a repining spirit, or of undue reliance on earthly friendships, he adds, “This is wrong,—my confidence should be in God, my Savior; He is able, and He will grant all needed comforts, and all needed blessings to every one that shall put his trust in Him.”

On learning of a severe bereavement in the family of an endeared friend, he writes,—“Nothing short of deep sympathy and grief could have prevailed on me to use my pen this day; but this cup of affliction which — has been called to drink, has touched a very tender place in my heart. Indeed, I cannot find language to express my feelings. The object of his first love and affection has been suddenly removed from his sight by death. The *bud* had ripened—the *blossom* was full of promise, and your beloved son is left to mourn the departure of his nearest and dearest earthly friend. I beg you to give to him my most affectionate love; also, to Mrs. —, and the children. I sincerely condole with you all in this painful bereavement, and pray that the grace of God may be found sufficient to carry you all in safety through every trial.” In this extract we have a specimen of the tender sym-

pathy he experienced in the afflictions of his friends. In the time of their trouble he was among the very first in the proffer of assistance, and in the expression of sympathies, which, it was evident, were spontaneous, sincere, pure,—flowing from a tender spirit, that communed with Heaven.

The following extracts from one of his letters also manifest the depth of his interest in those who were afflicted. “I am pained to hear of the deep affliction, to which our mutual friend, Mr. H., has been called. Few, if any, more worthy, more estimable men live in the present age. I feel very much for our personal friend, Mr. R., and hope he may soon find permanent relief. I most sincerely regret to hear of L——’s affliction, and hope my next information may be altogether more pleasant. I find it laborious to write, and must stop with saying but a word.”

The friendly outflow of his feelings in his confidential correspondence appears in the following passage,—“I am truly desirous to send you a letter, to let you know how grateful I feel that I am not forgotten by my friends;—particularly by those, under God, in whom I place the fullest confidence, and on whom, without hesitation, I can call for needed favors. I cannot doubt that all these free will offerings are pure and sincere;—not mere idle

words, such as you and I often meet with. It is painful that we find so little friendship while on our pilgrimage. Yet, notwithstanding the absence of what is so desirable, I have great reason to be thankful that there are some real and valuable friends who remain to my great comfort." In one of the last letters he ever wrote, acknowledging the receipt of a package containing documents of interest, he says,—“My dear friend, my heart is too full to express the gratitude which I owe to you and yours. I am truly feeble and helpless. I am truly thankful to hear of any improvement in the health of Mrs. C——, and hope she may soon be restored. I pray you to remember me most affectionately to Mrs. A——, to all the children at home or abroad, to Mr. J——, Mr. H——, Mr. R——, and to our mutual friend Mr. C——. I wish I could add a few more lines, but you must accept the will for the deed.”

These brief extracts from short letters, mostly relating to matters of business, develope one of the delightful features of his character, a sanctified friendship,—a feature, the development of which in his social intercourse and his correspondence attached to himself with peculiar strength those whom he loved. He could respond the lines :

“Friendship is power and riches all to me ;
Friendship's another element of life ;
Water and fire not of more general use,
To the support and comfort of the world,
Than friendship to the being of my joy :
I would do every thing to serve a Friend.”

DEA. OTIS

As a Benefactor.

E.

As a christian of large-hearted benevolence, the life of Mr. Otis furnishes a model well worthy the consideration of the disciples of Christ. Were Christians in general, and those especially whom God has blessed with wealth, actuated by a spirit as catholic and as generous, the church would never more lack means to carry forward her enterprises of benevolence on a scale as ample as the spiritual wants of the world would require. The treasury of the Lord would overflow.

During the forty-five years in which he was an active member of the church, he was solicited frequently to lend his personal labors and his pecuniary means to the promotion of various objects of christian benevolence and charity. His connection with the church was prior to the organization of those Institutions of christian benevolence, which from feeble beginnings have acquired a strength of position and facilities for usefulness, that give them

a strong hold upon the confidence, sympathies, and patronage of the christian community. He participated in the deliberations connected with the organization of such of these Institutions as had their centres of operation in New York city. And from the beginning he was a cheerful and generous contributor to their support. He attended the primary meetings composed of the few friends of christian benevolence, whose counsels, prayers, efforts, and contributions gave rise to some of the noble enterprises which are the glory and the hope of our country and of the age.

With the few original movers of the Sabbath School enterprise in New York city, Mr. Otis was associated. About the year 1807 or 8, a meeting of seven gentlemen was invited to the house of Mr. Richard Varick for mutual consultation on this subject, then entirely new to our churches. This meeting was composed of Divie Bethune, William Colgate, Ebenezer Cauldwell, George P. Shipman, Joseph Otis, and one other gentleman who, with Mr. Varick, constituted the first meeting in that city, if not the first in this country, the object of which was to devise and adopt measures for giving Sunday School Instruction. After a second meeting of the same parties at the same place, it was decided to call a public meeting in the Lecture Room of Wall

Street Church. This meeting, of which public notice was given, was fully attended, and resulted in the adoption of measures for the establishment of Sunday Schools in the churches of various denominations in the city. The influence of this movement soon extended into the country, and the results are witnessed in the establishment of those Institutions whose hopeful field of agency embraces the millions of children and youth in our country. That little meeting of seven has become a thousand, and thousands of thousands are experiencing its benignant influences. From that day of small things, Mr. Otis felt an unabated interest in Sunday School operations.

His co-operation was most hearty and effective in the establishment of the Seamen's Friend Society, and other Institutions created for the social elevation and religious improvement of this long neglected class of our fellow citizens. All those Societies, whose object is the propagation of the Gospel throughout the world, found in him a cheerful and constant supporter. With peculiar interest he watched their growth, and it was a cheering reflection in his old age, that it had been his privilege in the vigor of his christian manhood to participate in the primary labors and sacrifices whence these noble charities originated.

Awake to the importance of an educated ministry, and to the necessity of furnishing facilities that would tend to encourage and aid young men of piety in their preparation for the work of preaching the Gospel, he readily engaged with kindred spirits in the great work of establishing the Union Theological Seminary. According to his ability he contributed to its pecuniary wants, and in his last will testified his love for it by a generous legacy.

Mr. Otis' views of the Christian's obligations, in relation to the cause of benevolence, were well digested, practical, and comprehensive. He surveyed the whole field, and gave to his charities a wide range of distribution. Every appeal, that commended itself to his judgement as worthy of patronage, met a cordial response, whether it issued from the home or the foreign field. His heart was warm and capacious, and having early formed the habit of systematic charity, he brought forth rich fruit in old age. And in the generous bequests he has made to the leading Institutions of Christian benevolence, he, though dead, yet speaketh.

The following is a statement of the legacies he bequeathed for the purpose of christian benevolence and educational institutions :

To Otis Library,.....	\$7.000
To Yale College,.....	4.000

To Union Theological Seminary, N. Y.,.....	5.000
To American Board of Foreign Missions,.....	3.250
To American Home Missionary Society, ...	3.250
To American Tract Society,.....	3 250
To American Bible Society,.....	2.000
To American Seamen's Friend Society,.....	2.500
To Beloit College, Wisconsin,.....	2.000
To Female Assistant Society, N. Y.,.....	1.250
To Female Seminary, Cleveland, Ohio,.....	1.000
To Second Cong. Church, in Norwich,.....	2.000

In addition to these legacies he subscribed during the last year of his life somewhat over the sum of thirty-five hundred dollars to the fund, which has been raised for the establishment of the Norwich Free Academy, now in the process of construction. This was among the last deeds of his capacious generosity, and was an additional proof of his profound interest in whatever promised higher educational facilities for the youth in his native town.

DEA. OTIS

AS A

Member of the Church.

F.

If a steadfast and cordial interest in the sanctuary and its ministrations is an evidence of piety, no one who knew Mr. Otis will question the reality and sincerity of his religion. He was indeed a pillar in the church, a firm and reliable supporter of the ecclesiastical society with which he was connected. Spontaneously as well as liberally was his pecuniary support proffered in maintaining the institutions of the Gospel.

When the question of erecting a new Church was agitated by the Second Ecclesiastical Society in Norwich, he entered most heartily into the contemplated measure, and to his influence the church and society are greatly indebted for the ample and commodious accommodations which they enjoy for maintaining the public worship of God. In addition to a liberal subscription to the fund raised for building the church, he generously proposed to present to the

society, as soon as the church edifice should be completed, a new and beautiful organ of the largest class, the cost of which was nearly three thousand dollars.

He was one who appreciated not only the temporal wants of the pastor, who very often received substantial and most grateful testimonials of his kind remembrance, but his professional necessities. When he made provision for a public library, he also provided to have a pastors study on the second floor of the same building, to be held in trust for the use of the pastor of the church of which he died a member. Some five years since he appropriated the sum of one thousand dollars for the establishment of a pastoral library, as a permanent fixture of the study.

He had been in the habit of inquiring into the condition of the poor of the church, to whose wants he was a free and generous contributor. As a testimonial of his interest in their welfare he bequeathed to the officers of the church, in trust, the sum of two thousand dollars, the income of which is to be distributed to meet their necessities. Those christians who were destitute or sick were sure to find in him a friendly helper. He was truly a Father in Israel who loved to do good.



No man ever sympathized more sincerely, than he did in the embarrassments of those ministers who were straitened in their means of support,—or who had been subjected to heavy expenses by sickness in their families. He occasionally inquired of his pastor respecting the temporal circumstances of certain ministers, with whom he had some acquaintance, with a view to extend to them unsolicited aid.—Many a time has he forwarded his check to order for twenty-five, fifty, or a hundred dollars, to some clergyman at a distance, whose necessities came to his knowledge. On one occasion when his own pastor in a time of affliction was subjected to heavy expenses by the sickness of a child in a distant southern city, he proffered his aid with a father's kindness, authorizing him to draw on him for any balance of expenses which his own limited income would not enable him to meet. At another time when the health of his pastor seemed to require relaxation and rest, he proposed to meet his expenses if he would take a voyage to Europe. And when his last Will was opened, it was found that small sums, of from two hundred to two hundred and fifty dollars, were directed to be paid to several of his clerical acquaintance.

By his works he demonstrated his love for the ministry,—his love to the sanctuary, his love to the

church in which he stood as a pillar, and an ornament from early manhood till he had passed beyond his fourscore years. During the months of his last illness he often lamented the deprivation of the privileges of the house of God as one of his sorest trials. Relinquishing the hope that he should there occupy his seat again, at his request on the first Sabbath in March, the sacramental ordinance was administered privately in his chamber with a few friends. Before another sabbath he finished his course.

DEA. OTIS
AS
Estimated in the Community.

G.

The following tributes of respect have been spontaneously awarded by his fellow citizens, and placed upon official records.

“IN COURT OF COMMON COUNCIL,
City of Norwich, April 14th, 1854.”

This Board having been notified of the decease of the late Joseph Otis, Esq., of this city, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted.

Resolved,—That this Board have heard with profound sorrow of the decease of their late fellow citizen, Joseph Otis, Esq.,—the munificent founder of the public Institution in this city, known as the “OTIS LIBRARY.”

Resolved,—That the said deceased, from his many public and private virtues, and his large liberality for the public good, deserves to be held in lasting and grateful remembrance by the people of this community.

Resolved,—That as a mark of respect for the said deceased, this Board will attend his funeral.

Resolved,—That the Clerk cause to be delivered to the family of the deceased, and to the Trustees of the Otis Library, copies of these resolutions.

Resolved,—That the above proceedings be published in the several newspapers of the city."

A true copy of Record.

Attest, LEVI H. GODDARD, CLERK.

At a meeting of the Trustees of the Otis Library, held in the Library room, April 21st, 1854, the following resolutions were unanimously adopted.

"Whereas, it has pleased Almighty God in his wise providence to remove by death JOSEPH OTIS, the venerable Founder of this Institution, and as some expression of the views, entertained by said Trustees in respect to this event, may with special propriety be given, therefore

Resolved,—That in their corporate capacity, they devoutly recognise the hand of God in raising up for this community so sincere and liberal a benefactor, and that they record their cheerful testimony to the enlightened benevolence, the unwavering integrity, the courteous deportment, and exemplary virtues, which marked his character.

Resolved,—That in the establishment of a Public Library, with ample provision for its growth and permanency, they consider him as having rendered an important benefit to the educational interests of this community, as it respects the present and future generations.

Resolved,—That they sympathize in the sentiments of bereavement, so universally manifested on occasion of the decease of a fellow citizen, deservedly entitled to public esteem and grateful remembrance.

As the friends of the late Joseph Otis have requested that the Discourse preached on occasion of his death be published, with such an appendix as may embody some of the more important facts in his history,

Resolved,—That this Board unite in said request, and that they will co-operate with others in the measure for rendering such a tribute of respect to his memory.

Resolved.—That the foregoing expression of views and feelings being entertained by this Board, the same be entered on their records."

COPY FROM THE RECORDS,

GEORGE PERKINS, Sec'y.

Dea. Otis from Home.

H.

Mr. Otis was a Christian who failed not to carry his principles and his religion with him, whenever he journeyed, and wherever he sojourned. As an illustration, the following incident may be related. In a letter received from one of his friends since his disease, the writer says,—“I met with an Irish Roman Catholic gentlemen in Italy, with whom I conversed freely on the two religions, Romish and Protestant. He confessed that he had been much won towards the latter by his acquaintance with a Protestant gentlemen at the Virginia Springs. That gentleman and his wife, he said, were accustomed to have family prayers in their room morning and evening, inviting a few of their neighbors, and him among the rest, his room being near them. Upon inquiring, I found that Mr. and Mrs. Otis were the persons referred to. The catholic gentlemen expressed very great esteem for them both, and an unhesitating faith in the genuineness of their religion, be the claims of the Romish what they might. He often referred to them, and wished that he might

have similar views and feelings to theirs. He borrowed a New Testament of a fellow traveler, which I often found him reading. He did not renounce (nor ever has to my knowledge) his Catholic faith, or his Catholic connection at least; but he expressed his misgivings about it, and could not conceal his disgust at *such mummeries and morals* as he found with it in Rome itself. I will go home, said he, and tell my Bishop that if he wishes to keep us catholics he must not suffer us to come here." In this incident we have an illustration of the power of consistent christian example, when exhibited amidst the excitements and gaieties of a watering place.—Wherever he went, he manifested the meekness, the benevolence, the courtesy, and the consistency of a christian, and thus diffused around him the healthful savor of godliness.

His house was the hospitable home of the ministers of the Gospel, with whom he had a very extensive acquaintance. Their testimony from personal acquaintance is uniform in respect to the amiableness, the piety, and kindness, which characterized his conduct while they shared in his hospitalities, and in the privileges of social intercourse with him. To show the estimate in which he was held, the following letter from the Rev. Thomas H. Skinner, D. D., of New York, is with permission introduced. It is dated April 24th, 1854.

“My acquaintance with the late Mr. Joseph Otis, began soon after I came to this city to take the pastoral charge of the Mercer Street Church, and I continued to enjoy his society and friendship until he removed to Norwich. For one or two summers we were companions in travel, and residents together in the same quiet and beautiful retreat in the mountains of Virginia. Our intercourse with each other was intimate and confidential, and it has left on me a very distinct and very agreeable impression of his individuality as a man and a christian. We often talked of matters relating to ourselves, but my memory as to details in his history, does not enable me to give any recital of them, or to verify by reference to them, the estimate which I formed of him, from frequent conversations with him; and especially from our very pleasant sojourn together during the months of one or two summers.

This most worthy and amiable man outlived his generation. There are few among the living of those, who knew him best in the days of his strength and activity. He was for several years a member of the same church with the holy and amiable Elder Markoe, between whom and himself there was a special friendship, and, in some of the prominent traits of their religious character a degree of resemblance. They were both men of a kind and gentle

spirit, of courtesy of manners, of singular sincerity and purity. The piety of both was at the same time deeply spiritual and serious, and yet remarkably free from every form of moroseness and austerity. They both *adorned* religion by a strict and lovely walk before the church and the world. It was always refreshing to look on the face of Mr. Otis: It had a benign, friendly, affectionate aspect, even when his heart was sorrowful, and when his sorrow expressed itself in tears. And his natural and gracious amiability was not a weakness, nor was weakness its associate. He was a man of a penetrating and sound judgement; of sharp discrimination between true and false, good and evil, whether in things or persons; a trier of spirits though to men of sacred place and office. His charity covered a multitude of sins, but it did not cover hypocrisy or false professions. He was unsectarian,—a catholic indeed;—yet he discerned between essentials and unessentials, and had no fellowship with the preachers of “another Gospel.”

With the passive virtues,—patience, resignation, meekness, gentleness,—he combined an aggressive and energetic zeal, and took an active part in the management and labors of christian benevolence. At the Salt-sulphur Springs in Virginia he was the

means of erecting a chapel, in which it was my privilege to preach the opening sermon. His liberality was without pretention, but it was generous, judicious, considerate, and effective. He was a sincere friend, a lover of good men, a lover of hospitality, a christian gentleman. It is a comfort to me to recall the image of this lamented man. I anticipate much pleasure in reading the discourse concerning him, which is to be given to the public."

2362

